(a) whether Rail Vikas Nigam Ltd. has completed the gauge conversion of Bhiladi-Samdari;

(b) if not, the reasons therefor; and

(c) by when the gauge conversion would be completed ?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF RAILWAYS (SHRI R. VELU): (a) No, Sir.

(b) The work has been planned for completion during 2008-09. Gauge conversion of the entire stretch from Samdlari-Bhidi is, however, likely to be completed by September, 2009. The preliminary work to start mega block is in progress and expected to be completed by middle of November, 2008. Mega block may start from November/ December, 2008.

(c) The project is expected to be completed by September, 2009.

Modernisation of Mumbai local trains

†914. SHRI MANOHAR JOSHI: Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that despite huge revenues from Mumbai local trains adequate facilities are not provided to the passengers;

(b) if so, whether Government proposes to run trains equipped with modern coaches like Delhi Metro and to modernize all the Mumbai local train stations;

(c) if so, the details thereof; and

(d) if not, the reasons therefor?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF RAILWAYS (SHRI R. VELU): (a) New technology AC/DC EMU coaches with better interiors/exteriors and forced ventilation system are being introduced in Mumbai suburban in phased manner to provide better comforts to the passengers.

(b) and (c) As such, there is no plan to introduce EMUs on pattern of Delhi Metro in Mumbai suburban. However, introduction of air condition class in EMUs for which feasibility study is currently under way in Western Railway.

(d) Does not arise.

Extension of rail route upto Shirdi

†915. SHRI MANOHAR JOSHI: Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that Government is expanding rail route upto Shirdi in Maharashtra;

(b) if so, the details of the work carried out so far; and

(c) until when this rail route would be completed and the railway traffic become operational thereon?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF RAILWAYS (SHRI R. VELU): (a) Yes, Sir.

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†Original notice of the question was received in Hindi.